

StatCom's 2008 National Survey on Patient Flow Challenges and Technologies was designed to capture the thoughts and opinions of U.S. healthcare executives, including C-level executives, vice presidents and directors, regarding patient flow and technology issues at their facilities.

Among the more than 200 healthcare executives responding, the overwhelming majority (89 percent) say their facility has poor patient flow, and indicate the leading cause is poor communication. Despite that alarming number, only 56 percent of healthcare facilities have implemented patient flow systems.

The State of Patient Flow

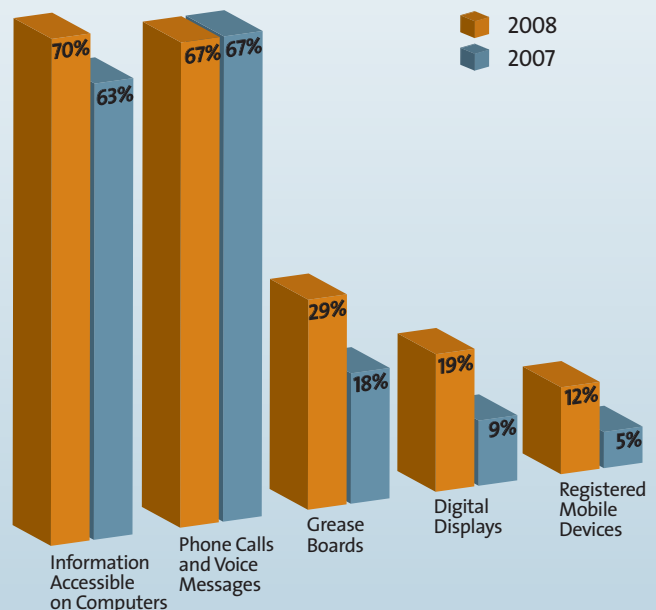
Hospitals and healthcare facilities have multiple tools and resources at their disposal for managing patient throughput. Many of these are manual, and some of them are customized for each department, but are not incorporated across the facility.

According to those surveyed, when it comes to patient status and information, in most cases, bedside nurses (85 percent) communicate information to friends and family. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of those surveyed say a physician or their designee (physician assistant or nurse practitioner), and 37 percent say an area manager provides patient status and information. Nineteen percent say displays in the waiting areas, 10 percent say patient itineraries, and nine percent say coaster pager prompts are methods used to communicate information about the patient to concerned parties.

Regarding the use of technology, it was nearly an even split with 52 percent of healthcare executives saying their facility utilizes bed management technology and 48 percent stating they rely on other methods. This is a 12 point increase for the use of bed management technology from the previous year. In 2007, 60 percent said there was no bed management software or technology within their facilities. Furthermore, the study reveals the combination of old vs. new technologies used for patient flow and bed management, such as the use of computers, phone calls and grease boards. (See *Old vs. New Tracking Technologies*).

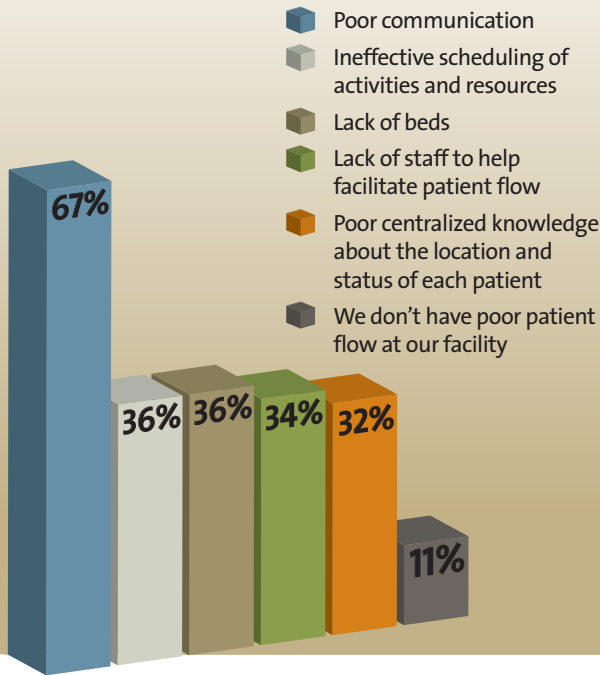
Old vs. New Tracking Technologies

Only 12 percent of U.S. healthcare leaders say their facility currently shows waiting times and/or care milestone progression status to patients and their families. Executives report a combination of old and new technologies is used when currently tracking patients and managing beds...



The Root of the Problem

Nearly all healthcare leaders (89 percent) nationwide say their facilities have poor patient flow issues. Poor communication is at the top of the list.



“While this research shows slight improvements over the previous year, patient flow challenges still exist, as facilities are slow to realize enterprise-wide systems offering real-time information for patients and their medical caregivers,” said Ben Sawyer, EVP of client services for StatCom. “The ability to capture and synchronize patient flow from admissions to discharge will be a major milestone in improving operational efficiency and meeting the tremendous demands of U.S. hospitals and medical facilities.”

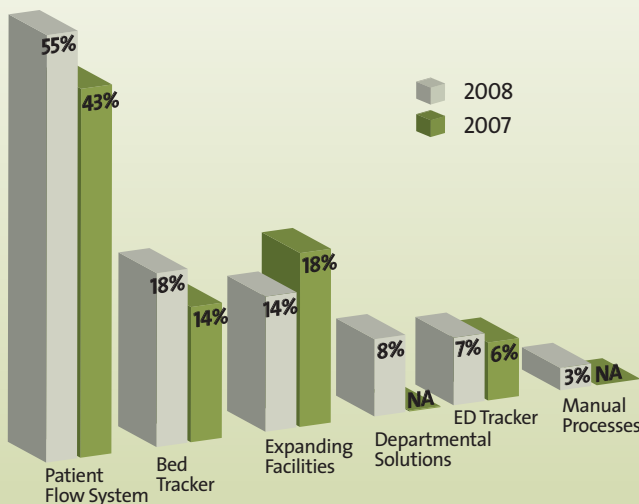
When asked to rank the challenges facilities currently face in coordinating the patient care process and the logistics associated with a patient’s stay, healthcare executives list capacity problems, discharge and physicians as the three greatest challenges. Nearly all surveyed (89 percent) report some patient flow issues, with “poor communication” listed most frequently as the cause. (See *The Root of the Problem*).

Making Improvements

Nearly all healthcare leaders (94 percent) say their facilities have incorporated process improvements to improve patient flow, compared with 92 percent in 2007. While this response is promising, barely more than half (56 percent) of healthcare facilities today have actually implemented a patient flow system (See *Improving Patient Throughput*).

Improving Patient Throughput

Nearly half of U.S. healthcare leaders (43 percent) say they do not use patient flow technology. Yet, when asked to rank which has the best potential to improve patient throughput, healthcare leaders say patient flow systems hands down...



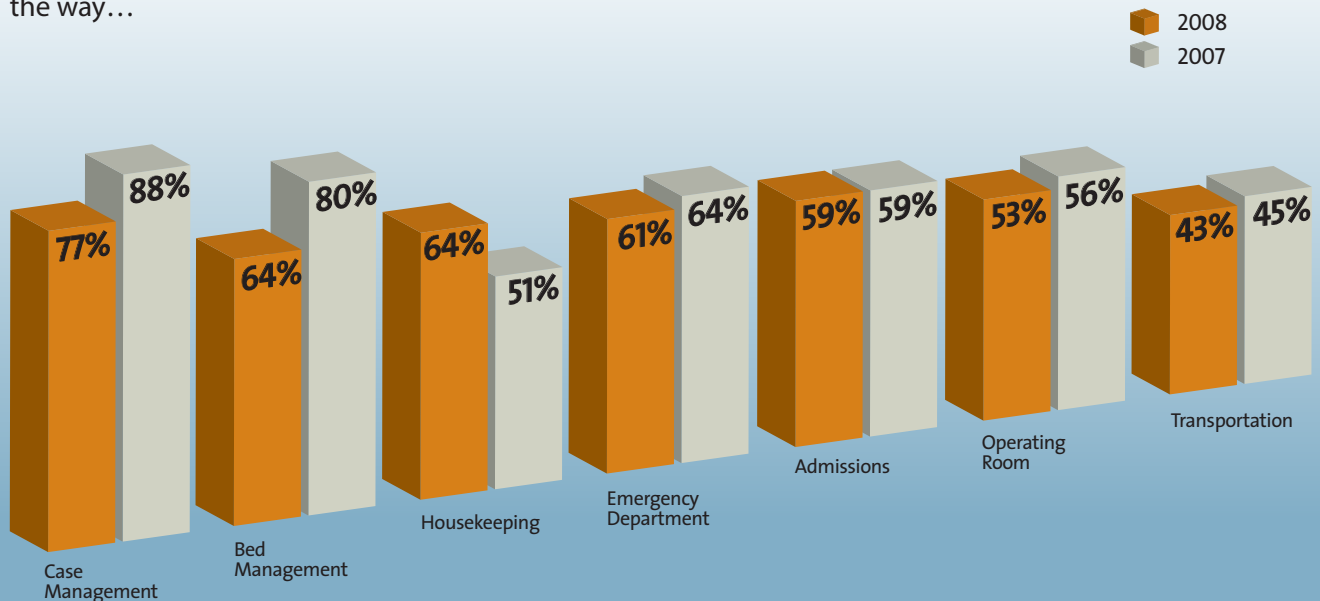
“The study suggests patient flow improvements can be met with certain challenges, but not from budgetary or technological standpoints,” said Sawyer. “These challenges stem from the perspective of an organization’s environment. Healthcare executives say overcoming behavioral patterns poses the greatest challenge, followed by resistance to change, when improving patient flow at their facility.”

Strategizing for Optimal Patient Throughput

Many healthcare facilities organize committees to evaluate patient flow and capacity issues. More than three-quarters (76 percent) of healthcare executives nationwide report their facility has such a committee, compared to 64 percent in 2007. Showing some improvement, a majority of those surveyed (54 percent) say committee recommendations were implemented more than half the time, compared with 43 percent in 2007.

Making an Impact

Several areas in healthcare facilities have a positive impact on patient flow. And according to the majority of U.S. healthcare executives, case management leads the way...



So what's the impact of these committees? The overwhelming majority (91 percent) of those surveyed say there has been a positive impact from the measures imposed by their committee. In addition, respondents report several areas such as case management, bed management and housekeeping have a positive impact on patient flow. (See *Making an Impact*).

The responsibility for optimizing patient flow rests largely on chief nursing officers according to 32 percent of respondents, followed by chief operating officers (15 percent), vice presidents of nursing (13 percent), chief executive officers (11 percent) and vice presidents of operations (four percent).

"It is clear patient flow should be a main focus for hospitals across the U.S.," said Sheri Sorrell, research manager for Jackson Healthcare. "And while many facilities have taken the first step, there is much more that can be done to streamline the processes, operations and logistics of

patient flow to get the most out of these improvements. Technology advances will certainly help to pave the way, and it is often the nursing officers who will lead the effort."

What Does the Future Hold?

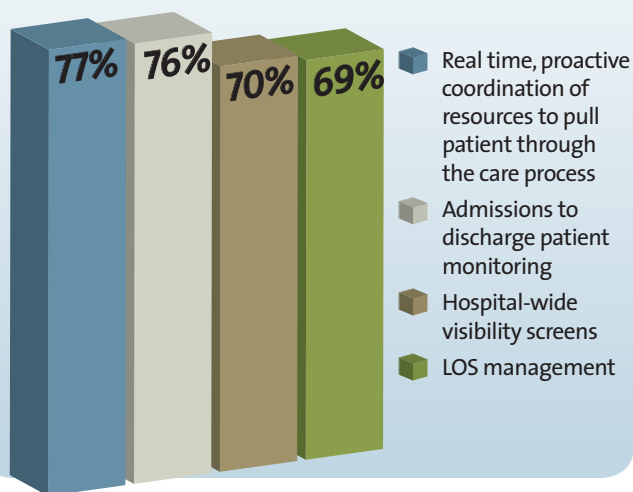
Looking toward the future, the vast majority (88 percent) of healthcare executives state that improved productivity and/or efficiency at their facility is essential to meet patient demand. In addition, 67 percent say improving technology, 43 percent say expanding facilities, 35 percent say hiring more nursing staff and three percent say hiring more administrative staff will be necessary to meet future patient demand.

Technology at its Best

While some of the processes at hospitals today are manual, technology is playing a larger role in helping facilities deal with patient flow. And when it comes to the technology to manage throughput, many options exist. Healthcare leaders indicate their priorities when it comes

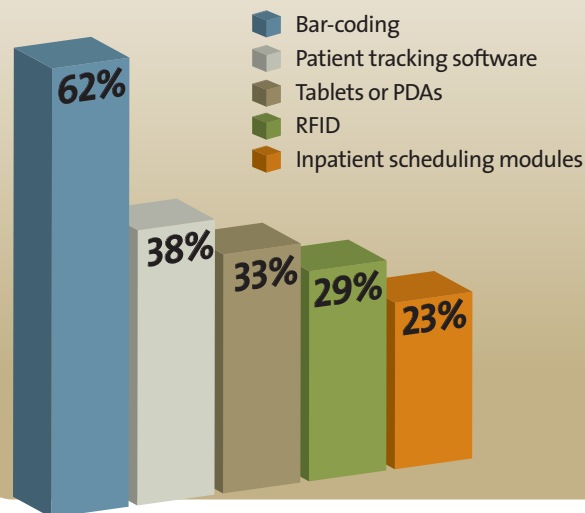
Highlights of Patient Flow Technology

Hospital leaders nationwide expressed certain attributes of the technology they would likely consider in a patient flow system...



Technologies on the Rise

To help track patient status, healthcare executives say they are currently considering new technologies such as...



to technology and meeting their patient flow needs. (See *Highlights of Patient Flow Technology*).

Simply put, technology provides a means to overcome many of the challenges faced by healthcare facilities and hospitals. In fact, the study reveals many leaders in the healthcare industry anticipate incorporating new technologies in the near future. To help track patient status, U.S. healthcare executives say they are currently considering bar-coding (62 percent) and patient tracking software (38 percent). (See *Technologies on the Rise*).

With 61 percent of healthcare executives reporting length of stay at their facility is on average greater than four days, capturing an up-to-the-minute picture of patient flow across the enterprise is a critical first step to managing the growing demands of the healthcare industry.

About the 2008 National Patient Flow Challenges and Technologies Survey

The survey was conducted in August 2008 and was sponsored by StatCom. Of the 237 respondents, more than half (59 percent) were CEOs, COOs, CFOs, CNOs, CMOs or CIOs, and 19 percent were directors.

About StatCom

StatCom's patient flow logistics and tracking software was developed to improve hospital-wide communications, patient throughput and capacity management. This unique healthcare IT solution provides an immediate and comprehensive view of the entire patient flow process with real-time tools to manage that flow within and between departments.

Operational visibility increases, communication is enhanced, and patient care hand-offs are turned into handshakes. As a result, financial performance is maximized while greatly enhancing the patient experience. A number of leading and innovative hospitals in the U.S. are using StatCom to address their patient flow challenges.

StatCom is a subsidiary of Jackson Healthcare Solutions, a group of companies focused on providing the healthcare industry with innovative people resources and IT solutions.

For more information contact StatCom at 800.930.0870 or at info@StatCom.com.